

Newsletter

PROCESSED

372 Stephens Hall
University of
California
Berkeley, CA 94720
642-3230



January 1984

JUN 08 2006

GTU LIBRARY

Happy New Year!

We are pleased to present the following paper on the history of Slavic studies at UC Berkeley, written by Olga Astromoff, Lecturer in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. The paper is printed here in its entirety with the kind permission of the author.

Towards a History of Slavic Studies at the
University of California, Berkeley --- Before 1945

The history of the Slavic Department at Berkeley goes back to 1901 when the following announcement appeared in the University catalog immediately following a list of courses offered by the Department of Romanic (sic) Languages:

University of California

RUSSIAN

GEORGE R. NOYES, Ph.D., Instructor in English and Russian.

1. Elementary. DR. NOYES.

Motti's Russian Grammar. Tolstoj's Snowstorm. Turgenev's
Fathers and Children.

Credit value and hours of recitation to be determined.

2. Advanced. DR. NOYES.

Rapid reading from Russian classics: Gogol, Turgenev, Dos-
toevskij, Tolstoj, Pushkin. Composition. Occasional lec-
tures on Russian literature.

Credit value and hours of recitation to be determined.

POLISH

1. Elementary. DR. NOYES.

Wieber Kiewicz; Polinsche Grammatik. Reading of Sienkiewicz.

Credit value and hours of recitation to be determined.

Within a year Bohemian (Czech) was added, and a year later G.R. Noyes was appointed Assistant Professor of English and Slavic Philology. In 1905-06 the courses in Slavic were divided into lower and upper division. The first graduate course, in Church Slavic,

was introduced in 1908-09, together with a course in Serbian prose and then one in Serbian grammar. For more than 15 years, with enrollment varying from 5 to 15 students, Professor Noyes taught all the Slavic courses singlehanded.

With the outbreak of World War I and the revolution in Russia, interest grew, and with it, the department. Two language assistants, in Bohemian and Serbo-Croatian, were appointed in 1917-18; in 1921-22 Noyes was named as the department's first chairman; and by 1922-23 the department had three regular faculty members: George Noyes, Alexander Kaun, and George Z. Patrick. Instruction was chiefly at the undergraduate level, but graduate study was developing steadily. The department awarded its first M.A. degree in 1931 and its first Ph.D. in 1938.

Intensive instruction in Russian was introduced at Berkeley shortly before World War II. During the war the department participated in the Army's Specialized Training Program by offering courses in Russian and Serbo-Croatian. Toward the end of the war the department underwent many changes as new scholars began to join its ranks.

So much for official information and statistics. What do we know about the life that pulsed behind them? Our main sources of information about that life are in the University archives: letters, newspapers, clippings, albums. A letter dated July 5, 1908, from Professor Noyes to University President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, discusses the commemoration of Tolstoy's 80th birthday: E. M. Wilbur was to speak on "Tolstoy's Contribution to Religious Thought" and G. W. Wells on "The Literary Art of Tolstoy." The letter mentions that invitations were to be sent to the Russian Consul and to other Russians in the vicinity.

In March 1908, Professor W. Lutosławski of Cracow gave a lecture on "The Romantic Poetry of Poland" and another on "The Poetry of Słowacki." In 1909 Julian Korski spoke to the department on "The Social Development of Poland Since the Third Partition."

The Daily Californian of October 13, 1910, printed the first mention of a Russian Circle that had apparently been organized three years earlier. Its members were "Russians who are students at UC, or are connected with the faculty and other nation members of the Russian classes." Meetings were to be held monthly. A year later, the paper reported that the Russian Circle had heard a lecture by F. A. Postnikov on "Aerial Navigation in the Russo-Japanese War."

In 1916 Professor Noyes organized a Slavic Circle with ten students. In the years that followed, the Daily Californian recorded regular meetings of the Slavic Society (or Slavic Club). These meetings reflect the organizers' persistent efforts to represent various Slavic languages in their programs.

The highlights of Slavic Society activities between 1919 and 1921 may be seen in an album presented to Professor Noyes by his students; it contains photographs and detailed descriptions of lectures, "tableaus" (traditional in those times), picnics, music and food. One photograph depicts Noyes in a cucumber patch wearing a "very red" shirt (he was participating in a "tableau"). Many happy meetings were evidently held during those years, and lively discussions took place. On November 20, 1917, Professor Kaun spoke on "The Meaning of the Russian Revolution." In October 1918, in Room 11 of Wheeler Hall, the first public meeting of the Slavic Society was held. Professor J. V. Fuller (History) described the Russian envoys at the Paris Peace Conference, and Professor Kaun presented a lantern show of Russian art.

In 1920 the tenth anniversary of Tolstoy's death was commemorated with a public reading, in the Library, of the author's four-act comedy, "The Fruits of the Enlightenment." At the end of the same year Professor Noyes spoke to the Slavic Club (as the Society was sometimes called) about student life in Russia. There follows a period

during which archival materials make no mention of Slavic Society activities, perhaps because the Society remained inactive.

Nonetheless, life went on at UC and in the world around it. The repercussions of the war and the Russian Revolution were spreading. In March 1917 Ludwik Ehrlich lectured on "Modern Poland." In the same year the University received a plea from the Polish Victims' Relief Fund in New York to help Professor Lutosławski, who was stranded near Geneva and afraid to return to Poland. In 1919 we find the Berkeley Daily Gazette requesting a probe of a talk on bolshevism given by Professor Kaun before the University Club in Honolulu. In his defense Kaun wrote that he was neither a politician nor a propagandist, but rather an educator, who thought that instead of supporting the quixotic Admiral Kolchak, the U.S. ought to let Russia work out her own political salvation. Indignation at the prospect of such a probe was voiced in academic circles. Nonetheless, an intelligence officer recommended that Kaun be put under surveillance. Finally, after a complete investigation of Kaun's utterances, University President David P. Barrows stated that he did not doubt the sincerity of Kaun's anti-bolshevism (Sept. 2, 1919).

In 1922 a request for a loan of money from "colleagues" at UC came from a student at the University of Lublin. University of California students had collected a fund with the general object of assisting foreign students, and after translating the letter, Professor Noyes referred it to President Barrows.

On February 24, 1926, the Slavic honor society "Dobro Slovo" was approved by the University's President, and John Batistich became its first president. In November, a constitution was adopted. A year later a motion was passed to communicate with Slavic departments at other universities, and specifically to establish chapters at Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Columbia and Stanford. The Society adhered to its objective of promoting Slavic studies and most Slavic languages and literatures were represented in its activities. These seldom went beyond purely academic interests and traditions, except during World War II: in 1942 the Society was urged to cooperate with the "Russian War Relief" organization, and later each member was asked to bring something from a list of items needed for a parcel. "The ladies began sewing baby clothes," the minutes of the meeting of April 11, 1944 note.

In 1926 Boris Morkovin of Charles University (Prague) was invited to teach during summer session; in June he gave a lecture on "Slavic Literature and Art."

Tolstoy's centennial in 1928 was marked by lectures on "Tolstoy as a Writer and as a Religious Teacher" (Noyes), "Tolstoy's Philosophy of History as Expressed in 'War and Peace'" (Kerner), and "Tolstoy and Bolshevism" (Patrick).

A Lermontov commemorative evening in April 1941 caused an exchange of troubled letters between its organizer, Professor Kaun, and University Vice-President and Provost M. E. Deutsch who was apprehensive that arrangements for the evening "would lean too far toward a species of entertainment (musical, dramatical, etc./i.e., dance/) as opposed to an evening of appreciation of a great literary figure." In the same flurry of letters Deutsch bemoaned the difficulty of climbing to the top floor of Haviland Hall where the lectures and celebrations were held.

It was in the same year, 1941, that Vice-President and Provost Deutsch accepted an offer made on behalf of the American-Russian Institute by Rose Isaak to present a Tolstoy exhibit in Haviland Hall. Two collections, one on Russian education and another on Pushkin (1937), had previously been shown by the Institute.

In February 1943 the Slavic Department sponsored two lectures, "Russia Now" and "The Red Army," by the Director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University of London, Sir Bernard Pares. He had taught at UC during the summer

session in 1924, and in March 1929 had given two lectures: "The Role of Rasputin" and "Religion in Russia."

It is interesting to observe the interest taken by various ethnic groups in Slavic instruction. As early as 1916 a South Slavic League, "Sokol," petitioned for the establishment of a Chair of South Slavic Studies. The same request came again in 1923 from a different group, this time with accompanying plans to endow a chair dedicated to "Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian languages and culture." The support of the Yugoslav consul was assured and Dr. Ante Tresich-Pavichich visited the University the same year. A fund was to be established and the University, with Professor Noyes as its representative, was to act as trustee.

An offer to exchange professors with Poland (Jagellonian University, Warsaw, Poznań, Lwów, Wilno) came in 1922. Professor Noyes was very willing to participate in such an exchange.

In 1935 the Polish Institute for Collaboration with Foreign Countries expressed a wish to supply the University of California Library with books by distinguished Polish and foreign authors dealing with various aspects of national life in Poland. In response Professors Noyes and Kerner dispatched a long list of desirable books.

In 1931 the Czech government made a valuable gift of books and periodicals to the University Library and to Professor Noyes. Five student scholarships were announced by Czechoslovakia and Hungary in March 1926. The requirements were: some knowledge of the language, a B.A. degree, the ability to do independent work, a health certificate, good moral character, and American citizenship.

In 1944 a long and rather emotional letter from the Czechoslovak National Council in America requested credit in Czech studies; Noyes responded that Bohemian had been offered by the department since 1902.

Beginning with the early 1920's most of the Russian students enrolled at UC came from the Far East. They brought with them their own traditions. In 1921 they organized the Russian National Student Organization at the University of California. It had its own constitution and a membership of about 150. This association was officially dissolved in 1936. The Russian University Club, however, existed until 1945. The Russian Museum in San Francisco has a copy of the first (and possibly the only) issue of The Russian Bear, published by students at UC in January 1930.

In order to provide scholarships, balls and "evenings" were organized regularly. Professor Kerner gave a speech on one such occasion in 1928. The Russian Student Fund, with headquarters in New York, gave loans but not scholarships. (The proportion of loans returned was gratifyingly "large".) Beneficiaries were discouraged from engaging in literary studies, "as in these topics, they would be at a great disadvantage in comparison with Americans and their education would be of little profit to them if they should return home" (Noyes to Dean W. M. Hart, Feb. 12, 1927).

As noted, Professor Noyes had been the sole member of the department until he was joined in 1917 by two language assistants and Professor Kaun. George Patrick had arrived in 1921 and two decades later Oleg Maslenikov, in 1942. For most of the years until his retirement, Noyes acted as chairman, and even after retiring in 1943 he continued to exert a strong influence. Having been the living personification of Slavic studies for several decades, this distinguished scholar could hardly leave the scene merely because of an official retirement date. Judging from his correspondence with Vice-President and Provost Deutsch in the early 40's, his views weighed heavily in the consideration of new appointments.

Toward the end of the Second World War, the Slavic Department began to change rapidly. Professor Patrick was seriously ill with tuberculosis; Professor Noyes had retired in 1943; and Professor Kaun died suddenly of a heart attack in 1944. New appointments were imminent. The list of available candidates included such names as Manfred Kridl, Wacław Lednicki, Julian Krzyżanowski, Roman Dyboski, Vladimir Nabokov-Sirine, Princess Nina Andronikova-Toumanova, and Ernest J. Simmons.

In November 1944 Professor Noyes wrote to Vice-President and Provost Deutsch that it was necessary to "find men who are competent to give our regular courses in the Russian language for plain ordinary American students, who are interested in such work, so that they do it conscientiously and with enthusiasm, and who at the same time are competent and productive Slavic scholars, with a certain amount of academic distinction." First in the wave of new appointments was Wacław Lednicki (1944); then came Gleb Struve (1946) and Francis J. Whitfield (1948). The Department and the curriculum had changed.

Note

Much of the information contained in this article is based on documents held in the University of California Archives, The Bancroft Library. The author is grateful to Mr. J.R.K. Kantor, University Archivist, for his assistance in locating specific documents. By the same token, the author's appreciation is extended to Mr. N. A. Slobodchikoff, Curator of the Russian Museum and Library in San Francisco, for his bibliographical assistance and permission to consult several rare publications held in the Museum's collections.

Olga Astromoff, Lecturer
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
University of California, Berkeley
July 1982

CENTER NEWS

The Slavic Department has recently begun a subscription to the Slavonic and East European Review, which is shelved in the departmental library. To avoid duplication, the Center has cancelled its subscription to this journal. Back issues of this journal, and of many journals to which the Center subscribes are available in the Center reading room by recall from storage.

BAG LUNCH SERIES - Dates for our bag lunches to be held during the Spring semester are:

January 25
February 1
February 15
March 7
March 21
April 4
April 18
May 2

Information on speakers, lecture titles, and schedule changes will appear in the Newsletter. Unless otherwise noted, all bag lunches are held in 442 Stephens at noon. See you there!

AREA-RELATED COURSES: SPRING SEMESTER 1984

Economics

106	Economics of Marxism	TuTh 9:30-11	102 Moffitt	D KOTZ
161	Comparative Economic Systems (incl. USSR, Hungary & Yugoslavia)	TuTh 8-9:30	30 Wheeler	K GRAY
163	Special Topics in Economic Systems -the Soviet economy	Th 11-12:30	t.b.a.	G GROSSMAN
164	Economic Systems Seminar	TuTh 2-3:30	250 Dwinelle	B WARD
260A	Economic Systems (incl. USSR & eastern European economies)	Th 4-6	263 Dwinelle	G GROSSMAN

Geography

162	The Soviet Union	TuTh 12:30-2	515 Earth Sci	D HOOSON
-----	------------------	--------------	---------------	----------

History

100	Modern Armenia and the Caucasus- 1801-1945	TuTh 12:30-2	134 Dwinelle	L MEGRIAN
103B	Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union: A Comparison	M 10-12	225 Dwinelle	N RIASANOVSKY
285B	Russian Government and Society- 1855-1917	M 3-5	3311 Dwinelle	N RIASANOVSKY

Political Science

129A	Soviet Foreign Policy	MWF 3-4	159 Mulford	G BRESLAUER
141B	Soviet Politics	MWF 2-3	126 Barrows	M OLCOTT
149	Religion and Politics	MWF 10-11	88 Dwinelle	M OLCOTT
203	Comparative Analysis of Communist Societies	M 2-4	791 Barrows	K JOWITT
229A	Soviet Foreign Policy	Th 12-2	791 Barrows	G BRESLAUER

Sociology

290	Comparative Revolutions: France and Russia	W 1-4	475 Barrows	V BONNELL
-----	---	-------	-------------	-----------

Note: Courses offered by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures are not included in this listing due to lack of space.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

Index

100	Index of Authors	100	Index of Subjects
101	Index of Titles	101	Index of Pages
102	Index of Years	102	Index of Volumes
103	Index of Series	103	Index of Editions
104	Index of Editions	104	Index of Reprints
105	Index of Reprints	105	Index of Translations
106	Index of Translations	106	Index of Illustrations
107	Index of Illustrations	107	Index of Maps
108	Index of Maps	108	Index of Tables
109	Index of Tables	109	Index of Figures
110	Index of Figures	110	Index of Plates

Center for Slavic and East European Studies
University of California
372 Stephens Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720

Index

111	Index of Authors	111	Index of Subjects
112	Index of Titles	112	Index of Pages
113	Index of Years	113	Index of Volumes
114	Index of Series	114	Index of Editions
115	Index of Editions	115	Index of Reprints
116	Index of Reprints	116	Index of Translations
117	Index of Translations	117	Index of Illustrations
118	Index of Illustrations	118	Index of Maps
119	Index of Maps	119	Index of Tables
120	Index of Tables	120	Index of Figures
121	Index of Figures	121	Index of Plates

Index

122	Index of Authors	122	Index of Subjects
123	Index of Titles	123	Index of Pages
124	Index of Years	124	Index of Volumes
125	Index of Series	125	Index of Editions
126	Index of Editions	126	Index of Reprints
127	Index of Reprints	127	Index of Translations
128	Index of Translations	128	Index of Illustrations
129	Index of Illustrations	129	Index of Maps
130	Index of Maps	130	Index of Tables
131	Index of Tables	131	Index of Figures
132	Index of Figures	132	Index of Plates

Index

133	Index of Authors	133	Index of Subjects
134	Index of Titles	134	Index of Pages
135	Index of Years	135	Index of Volumes
136	Index of Series	136	Index of Editions
137	Index of Editions	137	Index of Reprints
138	Index of Reprints	138	Index of Translations
139	Index of Translations	139	Index of Illustrations
140	Index of Illustrations	140	Index of Maps
141	Index of Maps	141	Index of Tables
142	Index of Tables	142	Index of Figures
143	Index of Figures	143	Index of Plates